



Mobile Phone Policy

It is the policy of our Scout Group, along with the rest of South West District, that Mobile Phones should not be taken on camps, activities or to weekly meetings.

The reasons for this are twofold:

1) Within the rules of the Scout Association, we have a strict procedure for contacting parents or the relevant authorities should accidents or problems arise on an activity or camp. Mobile phones can compromise this procedure.

Every camp/activity has an official telephone number for you to contact (in the event of an emergency) the activity leader. The activity leader is also able to contact parents, either directly or via a home contact, should the need arise.

A mobile phone gives members the opportunity to contact their parents directly, bypassing the role of Leaders. Undue distress may be caused on the part of the parent and/or their child concerning incidents leaders may know nothing about it. This particularly applies to cases of homesickness. It is important that members use a leader as their first point of contact for any concerns or problems they have, so that the leader team can work to resolve these issues. Leaders will then arrange to contact parents via the official channels as and when necessary.

2) Now that most phones have cameras and internet access, there is the potential for actions taken by young people, however innocent the intent, to be misinterpreted, leading unintentionally to Child Protection issues. This is particularly true if photographs are taken without consent or are inappropriate and then subsequently broadcast on social networks.

Parents can help us avoid these problems by ensuring their child does not arrive for a camp or outdoor activity with their phone. If a young person is found using a phone, they will be withdrawn and you will be asked to collect them immediately.

The safety of every member is the responsibility of the leaders and they will always have their own form of emergency contact, should problems arise. Young people should not take on this responsibility.

Very occasionally Scouts and Explorers may be asked to bring a phone to specific events, particularly if they are alone. If so, they will be wrapped securely in a plastic bag and used for emergency calls only. However, if you have not been asked, do not bring a phone.

With regard to weekly meetings, again phones can become a source of disruption with constant interruptions by taking calls, texting, playing games or listening to music. This makes it very difficult to run an exciting, educational and safe programme.

We are aware that some members arrive for meetings alone and parents wish them to carry phones for safety reasons. In these situations, please ensure phones are handed in to a leader at the start of the evening (switched off) and they will be stored and returned at the end.

If you wish to discuss any matters arising from this policy, please speak to a section leader, who will be happy to advise further.